

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, April 1 is a historic day for Black Chicagoans;
3 on April 1, 1963, WVON, "The Voice of the Negro", began
4 broadcasting as the first full-service, Black-oriented music
5 station in Chicago; on April 1, 2003, not only will the
6 station celebrate 40 years of serving Chicago's Black
7 community, but the Supreme Court will begin hearing arguments
8 regarding Affirmative Action; to be rendered in the coming
9 months, this decision will affect all non-White people in
10 America; and

11 WHEREAS, Originating from the acquisition of WHFC, a
12 1,000-watt station licensed to Cicero by Leonard and Phil
13 Chess, WVON began broadcasting with a group of handpicked
14 radio personalities that included Franklin McCarthy, E.
15 Rodney Jones, Herb Kent, Wesley South, and Pervis Spann; they
16 became known as the "Good Guys" and eventually added to their
17 roster Ric Ricardo, Bill "Butterball" Crane, Ed Cook, Joe
18 Cobb, Roy Wood, Ed Maloney, Bill "Doc" Lee, Don Cornelius,
19 Richard Pegue, Isabel Joseph Johnson, Cecil Hale, and McKey
20 Fitzhugh; and

21 WHEREAS, Under the direction of the station's general
22 manager, Lucky Cordell, and its "Ambassador of Goodwill",
23 Bernadine C. Washington, the Good Guys held Black Chicago
24 captive for more than a decade and ranked consistently among
25 the top three stations in the Chicago radio market; and

26 WHEREAS, Bernadine Washington was the vice-president and
27 general manager of WVON in the 1960s; in an era where women
28 were just beginning to be accepted in the workplace and Black
29 women had an even tougher time, Ms. Washington personified
30 class and style and was a businesswoman to emulate; and

31 WHEREAS, During a time when Blacks were actively involved
32 in the Civil Rights Movement, WVON was the voice of

1 information for local and national affairs; in addition, the
2 Good Guys were involved in numerous activities in a variety
3 of areas throughout Chicago; the annual basketball game "The
4 Good Guys vs. the Harlem Globetrotters" drew tens of
5 thousands to the Chicago Stadium and the International
6 Amphitheater and all proceeds raised went to charity; every
7 year, the Good Guys participated in a holiday distribution of
8 1,000 turkeys; and

9 WHEREAS, Many prominent people were featured on WVON,
10 including Elijah Muhammad, Robert Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther
11 King, Jr., Maclom X, Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, Jackie
12 Robinson, Duke Ellington, Jimmy Carter, and Dick Gregory;
13 during the days of Operation Breadbasket, Rev. Jesse Jackson,
14 Sr. had a regular spot on Friday nights; when Medgar Evers
15 was killed on June 11, 1963, Wesley South's show "Hotline"
16 received 50,000 calls and the circuits were jammed,
17 preventing dialing out in the area; this massive audience
18 response led to the creation of designated lines for radio
19 broadcasters; and

20 WHEREAS, Through a series of events, changes in
21 ownership, and frequency changes, WVON was purchased by
22 members of the Good Guys, Pervis Spann and Wesley South; in
23 1986, the format of WVON was changed to mostly talk; and

24 WHEREAS, Today, WVON continues to provide a platform for
25 Black Chicago to air its concerns, express its differences,
26 and discuss issues that affect society; it is the voice of
27 Black people in Chicago; the personalities of WVON are Sharon
28 McGhee, Cliff Kelley, Perri Small, Monique Caradine,
29 Professor Willie Dixon, and original Good Guy, Pervis Spann;
30 keeping the memory of Bernadine Washington alive is Melody
31 Spann-Cooper, who serves as the president and general manager
32 of WVON; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
2 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
3 we congratulate WVON on the occasion of its 40th anniversary
4 of being the voice for Black Chicago, and we commend the
5 station for its work to inform, educate, and provide a forum
6 for Black Chicago; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
8 presented to WVON as a token of our respect and esteem and
9 with sincere wishes for its continued success.